MS 258

Among the Mosengere, Bobaie, Basakata, Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, on the other hand, the natives still use the primitive process.

This varies according to the region, insofar as the materials used in the preparation are concerned.

Among the Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Basakata, and Bobaie, the natives use only the salt grass that grows abundantly in the marshes and along the marshy banks of certain rivers in the region.

In the territory of the Ipanga, Batitu, Bokala, and Yaelima, where this precious resource is lacking, the natives use the trunks of banana trees and especially the flowers of palm trees, whose ashes are quite rich in alkaline matter.

MS [361]

Salt grass is harvested toward the end of the dry season.

At this time groups of Mosengere, Wadia, Tumba, Bobaie, and Basakata of the interior leave their villages to camp along the rivers with marshy banks.

MS [342]

They choose a site suitable for setting up the few huts that will serve them as shelters during their temporary sojourn in the region. These huts are usually very poorly constructed. Built hastily and carelessly, they are provisional shelters, refuges for the night, rather than dwellings.

MS 258 ●423

In former times the whole expanse of the marshy plain covered with salt grass was divided into sections.

Each native group had its own well-defined area and exploited it exclusively. [107]

The site for the huts occupied by each such group was determined by the location of the familial reservation or domain and was chosen so as to lie in the center of it.

The time of year when the salt grass was gathered and the length of the period of exploitation were regulated. In short, the preparation of salt was a national industry, governed by special laws to which the whole tribe had to conform.

At the present time, the groups gather salt grass wherever they think best, without regard for the customs and rights of the past. This work of harvesting the grass falls to the women.

MS 258 462

While the men are fishing, the women, provided with large knives, cut down the tall grass that grows in the marshes or along

601 politically, his whole society is, in fact, based on those relationships
561 which are incomprehensible to us. Indeed, the order of duty and re-
613 sponsibility, of authority and honor, are socially, legally, and politically determined by the order of birth. That order is determined by generation, and within the generation, by age: from the oldest father down the whole line of fathers to the oldest "child" in the whole row of children. The children of your older brother, even if they are younger in years, go before your own children. As we shall see later, the female members of the family, who practically fall outside this order, recover their place of honor through their sons.

613 From this short description of the paternal clan, it is immediately apparent that the clan is not a geographical concept among the K Nkundo. Wherever the daughter may marry, wherever the son may wander in service to the Whites, that person always and everywhere continues by law to belong to his wise, and he remains bound to all the rights and duties of his place in that community.

602 It also appears that clan and blood relationship do not come any-
613 where near to blanketing each other. Each "blood relationship" of the Nkundo extends itself over various paternal clans, since the blood relations of the mother, as well as the descendants of all the other women of my wise who are lawfully married out of the clan, belong to another wise.

/152/ 3. Inheritance in the Clan

613 Each clan has possessions that constitute the inheritance or patrimony
421 of the members, the domain of the family. These goods are of two kinds: economic and dotal. The former are subdivided into real property, or inalienable property, and personal property.

613 The real property of the clan consists of land and waters. The land
483 is divided into: arable land, land for gardens, and hunting areas. These constitute common property, whose cultivation or usufruct is divided among the members of the clan: each one receives his garden land and hunting ground to clear; as soon as the user leaves it, that ground is free again for the community. Palm groves, of course, also remain common property of the members. A similar arrangement applies to water rights. Larger fishing areas remain common property and are, under the leadership of the clan head, communally exploited. Smaller fishing grounds, creeks, ponds, etc., are allotted to each

613 member. In the case of common use or of an exceptionally good
423 yield (large game, a rich haul of fish, large yield from a particular cultivation of common property, such as palm beer), these are divided by the clan leader and their respective shares allotted to all members.

613 Personal property consists of the hut and the tools of the man, the
422 furniture of the woman, and the domestic animals. These are movable and can also go out of the clan through inheritance. Should they leave their husbands, married women may taken with them whatever they have received or inherited personally from their wise.

421 In contrast to the economic property of the clan, there is the dotal
613 or capital property, the marriage settlements, which do not have economic, but only legal value. They represent the rights over people.
583 In the first place we find those persons who themselves are the source of rights: the marriageable girls (bibunanyi) of the clan /A/ and the substitutes for women married into the clan /A/—that is, the women who are married into the allied clan /B/ with the acquired bride price (nkita). /Ed. Clan A pays bride price for a woman from clan B, the allied clan. Then clan B uses this acquired bride price to obtain another woman in marriage, a "substitute." This substitute is nkita to
[56] the original woman./ In addition, there are the slaves who can replace a caput. In the second place, there are the titles which represent
421 a caput: the /153/ so-called dotal securities (baumba). These dotal
613 securities or titles are kept by the clan leader and, with the knowledge of his immediate successor, hidden somewhere in the ground. With the approval of the clan council, he may also lend them out. These dotal possessions or rights are also common property of the clan and are used to procure a wife for the clan members, each in his turn.

The common ownership of the economic property makes possible the difficult sharing of woods and river, prevents the cutting up of the property, hinders the impoverishment and the proletarization of the poor, and insures the livelihood of all of the clan members. This common ownership has nothing more to do with communism than the common ownership of property in our nuclear families.

The dotal or capital property, the bride price titles, which have perhaps aroused the most indignant and lofty compassion of our civilized world, have less to do with buying and selling the wife then our own dowry and class system. They are permanent legal titles of the contract which is made between the clans of the couple on the occasion of the marriage. Our individualistic liberalism and mercantilism have regarded these legal securities only through economic spectacles and

614 only of lesser importance (see below, under local groups). The
554 headman of the B-group is the oldest of the seniors of the related A-groups, that is, the senior of the B-group. He is not, however, fully in charge of affairs like the elder of the A-group; he should rather be seen as princeps inter pares. This, of course, does not affect his position as senior of his own A-group.

614 Within a B-group landed property is often still regarded
423 as belonging together, even though fixed boundaries between the territories of the constituent groups may already exist. In general, however, it may be assumed that the other elders will not object if a hunting expedition is extended to their territory, if, under certain circumstances, the soil of their district is used for planting, or if certain wild plants are taken from there for building a house or as raw material for a craftsman. Membership in a B-group is determined by membership in an A-group.

614 At this point we shall not enter into a discussion of the
895 genealogical peculiarities which result from the significance of the bride price. We learned of one case of incest which occurred between members of two A-groups which formed a B-group, but we have not heard of anything like that occurring within an A-group. In this connection, however, we do not refer to those acts of incest which are required to make a particularly powerful charm become effective.

Summing up all that is characteristic of B-groups:

614 There is only one priest of the kinship group; cohesion within a B-group is very close, people cooperate extensively, all important matters are decided by the group, even those which, strictly speaking, concern only the constituent A-groups; in this connection, the oldest of the seniors has a somewhat privileged position.

Groups of Rank C

The cohesion within a group of this category is considerably looser, although on this level particularly one can find great differences among the individual groups. For example, the groups Lovendo and Besilo consider themselves much closer